



# MEMOIR

OF THE

# LIFE

OF

**EDMUND KEAN, Esq.**

---

**INCLUDING THE ACCOUNT OF MR. KEAN'S PRESENT  
VISIT TO AMERICA.**

---

**CAREFULLY COMPILED.**

**FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES, AND INTERPERSED WITH ANECDOTES.**

---

**QUEBEC:**

---

**PRINTED AND SOLD BY NEILSON & COWAN,  
PRINTERS AND BOOKSELLERS, NO. 3, MOUNTAIN STREET.**

---

**1826.**

## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

**T**HE visit of this celebrated actor to the Cities of Montreal and Quebec, and the sensation occasioned by this era in the dramatic annals of Canada, has induced the publishers of this brief sketch to submit it to the public, in the hope that it will not be unacceptable at a period when every circumstance connected with the extraordinary individual to whom it relates is a matter of considerable interest.

4TH. SEPTEMBER, 1826.

## MEMOIR OF MR. KEAN.

---

Mr. KEAN was born in Castle-street, Leicester-square, London, November 4, 1787. His father, Aaron Kean, was in the humble walks of life ; his mother, who, we understand is still living was a daughter of the celebrated George Saville Carey. His uncle, Moses Kean, was much celebrated for his ventriloquism and imitative talents.

The subject of our memoir was scarcely able to walk alone, when his parents, whose poverty would not allow of their being burthened with an idle inmate in the family, placed him in Drury-Lane Theatre in the lower department of pantomime, under a celebrated posture-master, under whose tuition his limbs acquired an extraordinary degree of flexibility, and became capable of adapting themselves to the most surprising attitudes and the strangest contortions. These exertions, however, were too great for his strength and health, and his bones became in some degree distorted, affording a singular contrast to his features, which were naturally beautiful, and were rendered more interesting by the sickly hue which they thus acquired. There were some among the actors whom his early talents had conciliated, and who, when his parents had begun to look with despair on his increasing deformity, generously came forward and procured for him medical advice, and the necessary applications to counteract this dreadful evil. The distorted limbs were furnished with irons to direct and support their growth, and as these incumbrances unfitted him for the performance of *Cupid* in *Cimon*, the manager converted him into a *Devil* in the *Christmas Pantomime*.

He remained at the Theatre till his fifth year, about which time a curious incident is said to have occurred to him, and which was the cause of his quitting this Temple of Thespis : it is thus detailed by one of his biographers :—In the performance of *Macbeth*, at the opening of the new house in March, 1794, Mr. John Kemble, who was at that time manager, imagined that he could increase the effect of the incantation scene, and therefore resolved that “the black spirits and white, blue spirits and grey,” should be brought before the audience in *propria persona*, and a number of children were accordingly appointed to personate a party of goblins and other fantastical creations, who were to dance in a circle, while the witches were moving round a cauldron, winding up the charm that was



afterwards to deceive the usurper of Duncan's throne.— Among those selected for this purpose, young Kean of course was employed, as being accustomed to the stage ; but his appearance on this occasion was as little advantageous to himself as his employer : just at the moment of Macbeth's entrance into the cavern, the boy made an unlucky step, from which, owing to the irons about his limbs, he could not recover ; he fell against the child next to him, who rolled upon his neighbour, who, in turn, jostled upon the next, and the impulse thus communicated, like an electric shock, went round the circle, till the whole party "toppled down headlong," and was laid prostrate on the floor. The comedy of this event mingled not very harmoniously with the tragic-sublime of the scene, and the laughter of the audience was, if possible, still less in unison with the feelings of Mr. Kemble, who, however remarkable for self-possession, could not fail to be disconcerted by an accident so ludicrous. He was a decided enemy to every thing that in the slightest way infringed upon the decorum of the scene ; of course, then, he looked upon this accident as a serious evil, and determined to dismiss the goblin troop from Macbeth, observing, "these things must not be done after these ways, else they would make us mad." The cause of this confusion, however,

"smiled in the storm.

and very philosophically replied to all reproaches, that "he had never before acted in tragedy," a reply which by no means altered the manager's resolution : he was dismissed from Macbeth and the Theatre. This anecdote, if true, is certainly most curious. Little could the manager have thought, that the mischief-making goblin who had thus spoiled his beautiful invention, would one day become the rival of his Fame !

His early talents already gave promise of his future superiority, and his mother felt anxious to give him the benefits of education. Accordingly, on his quitting the Theatre, she obtained his consent (which it appears was a necessary preliminary, as he already evinced that he possessed a will of his own) to the plan which she had laid down, and he was sent to a school in Orange-court. Soon, however, he became weary of the monotonous recurrence of stated tasks, and determined to go to sea. In vain his mother combated this resolution with all her power ; for when he saw that he could not obtain her consent to his plan, he determined to put it in practice without, and accordingly left his home without the ceremony of leave-taking, and entered as cabin boy on board a vessel bound to Madeira. It must be tolerably clear that the state of absolute slavery into which he had thus wilfully consigned himself, would by no means agree with his established habits of independence : it is, therefore, not at all surprising to find him, before the Vessel

arrived at its destination, laying a plan for his escape from the rigours of his servitude, which by counterfeiting illness, attended by deafness, he was at length enabled to effect.

Arrived in London, and restored by the healthful breezes of his native land to the free use of his faculties, he found himself destitute both of friends and money. His mother, unfortunately, was gone into the country, and he knew not to whom else to apply; at length he bethought him of his nurse, and she conducted him to the lodgings of his uncle Moses. Here he met Miss Tidswell of Drury-Lane Theatre, a lady who, from this time, treated him with a kindness truly maternal. His uncle encouraged his predilection for the stage, and is said to have given him several hints, which he afterwards turned to good account. It was natural, however, that there should exist a shade of difference, in regard to the Drama, between the uncle and nephew: the old man's views were of course turned towards the regular drama, while the imagination of the boy could not fail to be captivated by the pantomimic exhibitions of Bartholomew Fair, and his body having retained all its flexibility, while his bones had recovered their proper direction, the rope dancers and tumblers of Saunders' Company encouraged him in the practice of the manœuvres by which they entertained the public. He has often been caught in the act of running round the room upon his hands with his legs in the air, and of performing other tumbling tricks, and could imitate, before he was seven years' old, nightingales, monkees, knife-grinders, and *other interesting animals*, &c. To the lower walks of the profession, however, his uncle entertained the most decided objections; and it is probable that he was indebted to him for speeches from *Lear*, *Richard III.*, &c. which he was accustomed to recite in the manner of the most popular performers of the day.

Death, however, soon deprived him of his uncle's protection; and now that he was left at liberty to follow the bent of his inclination, he united himself to Saunders' Company at Bartholomew Fair, at which he made his first appearance in the character of a *monkey*, the gambols of which he imitated with peculiar cleverness: his dexterity, indeed, in changing his figure was so great, that he has been seen on throwing himself to the ground (like Aaron's rod) to take the form of a serpent. He did not, however, accompany the troop from fair to fair, but remained in London under Miss Tidswell's protection for nearly seven years, during which time the inquiries which he made concerning his mother were unavailing. At length, having heard that his mother was playing at Portsmouth, he resolved, in spite of the remonstrance of his protectress, to set out in search of her. He travelled on foot to Portsmouth, and on his arrival

there discovered that he had been misinformed : his mother was not there, and his scanty funds being exhausted, he felt that he was thrown entirely on his own resources. In this emergency what was he to do ? but one path was open to him—he hired a room for the purpose of exhibition, in order to defray his expenses home. In this effort he was successful ; he cleared about three pounds, and it appears that the approbation which he received on this occasion determined him in the choice of the stage as a profession. Soon after his return to London, he appeared at Sadler's Wells, where his recitation of *Rolla's Address to the Peruvians* gained him so much popularity as to make him apply himself diligently to the study of the best dramatic authors.

His protectress, Miss Tidswell, encouraged him in this pursuit, and furnished him with letters of recommendation to the Manager of a small Theatre in Yorkshire, where he played under the name of CAREY, and though only *thirteen*, gained a considerable portion of applause in the characters of *Hamlet*, *Cato*, and *Lord Hastings*. After this he performed at Windsor, where his hopes of future fame were excited to the highest acme, by the approbation testified by Royalty, of his recitation of *Saturn's Address to the Sun*, and the first soliloquy in *Richard III.* Here he was also fortunate enough to attract the notice of Dr. Drury, who, in consequence, (it is said,) sent him to Eton school, where he remained three years. In this short time he is said to have become thoroughly acquainted with *Virgil*, *Cicero*, and *Sallust* ; and also to have commanded the approbation of his master, and excited the emulation of his school-fellows, by his skilful recitation of a Latin Ode. On leaving Eton, he resumed his theatrical career and his assumed name of CAREY, and obtained an engagement at Birmingham, where he played *Hamlet* with success, but not with that decided warmth of approbation to which he had been accustomed.—From Birmingham he proceeded to Edinburgh, where the manager engaged him for 20 nights, on 12 of which successively he played *Hamlet*, to crowded houses. He next appeared at Sheerness, where he sometimes played in the higher walks of Comedy. Of the succeeding years of his life, little is known with certainty. Many idle stories are in circulation with respect to him, but the greater part are obviously destitute of any title to be believed. It is clear, however, that he must have undergone the usual vicissitudes of a stroller's life, and it is well known that he was subjected to its most dreadful privations.—He played at Seven Oaks, at Swansea, and at Waterford, at which latter place he married. His union, however, brought with it no increase of fortune, and consequently added to the difficulties with which he had to contend. He remained two years in Cherry's company, which he left for Weymouth, and

Weymouth again for Exeter, where he became a universal favourite. A dispute with the manager drove him from these boards, and his next appearance was on the Guernsey stage ; and here we meet with the following curious and authentic document, which deserves to be recorded as a warning to all ignorant and malicious critics on the one hand, and to a too credulous public on the other :—

" Last night a young man, whose name the bills said was Kean, made his first appearance in *Hamlet*, and truly his performance of that character made us wish that we had been indulged with the country system of excluding it, and playing all the other characters. This person had, we understand, a high character in several parts of England, and his vanity has repeatedly prompted him to endeavour to procure an engagement at one of the theatres in the metropolis ; the difficulties he has met with have, however, proved insurmountable, and the theatres of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden have spared themselves the disgrace to which they would be subject, by countenancing such impudence and incompetency. Even his performance of the inferior characters of the drama would be objectionable, if there was nothing to render him ridiculous but one of the vilest figures that has been seen either on or off the stage ; and if his mind was half so well qualified for the conception of *Richard III.* which he is shortly to appear in, as his person is suited to the deformities with which the tyrant is said to have been distinguished from his brothers, his success would be most unequivocal. As to his *Hamlet*, it was one of the most terrible misrepresentations to which Shakespeare has ever been subjected. Without grace or dignity he comes forward ; he shows an unconsciousness that any body is before him, and is often so forgetful of the respect due to an audience, that he turns his back upon them in some of those scenes where contemplation is to be indulged, as if for the purpose of showing his abstractedness from all ordinary objects !!! His voice is harsh and monotonous, but as it is deep, answers well enough the idea he entertains of impressing terror by a tone which seems to proceed from a charnel-house."

They who are accustomed to the London newspapers, and know what influence they possess over the public mind, will be well aware that such criticism was enough to ruin the youthful candidate. Those to whom it was addressed were willing to be convinced ; and Kean had too little prudence as well as too much spirit, to bow before the coming tempest : accordingly when he there first appeared in *Richard*, he was greeted with laughter and hisses, even in the first scene : for some time his patience was proof against the worst efforts of malignity, till at last, irritated by continued opposition, he applied the words of the scene to his auditors, and boldly addressed the pit, with—

" Unmannered dogs, stand ye when I command !"

The clamour of course increased, and only paused a moment in expectation of an apology. In this, however, they were deceived ; so far from attempting to soothe their wounded pride, Kean came forward and told them, " that the only proof of understanding they had ever given, was the proper application of the few words he had just uttered." The manager now thought proper to interfere, and the part of *Richard* was given to a man of less ability, but in higher favour with the brutal audience.

His merciless enemies, however, did not rest satisfied with



this ; to have driven him from the stage, and reduced him and his family to a state nearly approaching to starvation, was not enough. They persisted in their attacks upon him, and compelled him at length to quit the town, and take refuge in its outskirts. They believed that their triumph over him would not be complete until they had reduced him to unconditional submission, and this they were determined, if possible, to effect. But they had mistaken the man with whom they had to deal ; and though his distress daily increased, his spirit still rose superior to persecution. At length some strangers on the Island, who had seen and admired him at Weymouth, applied to Governor Doyle on his behalf, and the Governor warmly espousing his cause, immediately offered to become responsible for the trifling debts which he had contracted, and which did not exceed twenty pounds. This welcome act of friendship, though it freed him from all present fear, opened no prospects for the future, and it became a serious question—what was next to be done ? His profession seemed at the moment totally lost to him, and that of *Arms* seemed now to offer the fairest chance of success. Accordingly, he applied to the Governor ; informed him of the resolution he had taken, and asked his assistance in the accomplishment of his object, which was readily promised, though at the same time, the Governor fairly pointed out to him the little prospect there was of being able to support a family on the pay of a subaltern. To this, Kean replied, “that he was aware of the weight of this objection, but his wife had often been obliged to eat of the camelion’s dish, and the inconveniences likely to occur in the new character could not possibly amount to a total denial of comforts, for what family could starve upon four and nine-pence a-day ? As to his children, one of them was certainly an infant, but the other was two years old, and had already made considerable advances in the business of the stage, and could support his brother till that brother was able to act for himself.” On the mention of the extraordinary abilities of this child, the Governor expressed a wish to witness them ; and the astonishment which he felt at the child’s talents, which could be only attributed to the instructions of the father, induced him, in the warmth of the moment, to request the latter to recite some favourite scene.—Kean selected that in which *Iago* speaks of the handkerchief, and the Governor was so delighted with his delineation of the two characters, that he immediately retracted his promise of military patronage, declaring that it would be a crime to withdraw such talent from its proper sphere, and offering him at the same time his assistance in his profession.

The favour of the Governor, though it silenced his enemies, and shielded him in a great measure from their persecutions,

was not sufficient to render him popular, consequently his benefit did not produce a sufficient sum to discharge his friendly debt, and pay for the passage of himself and his family to England. It was just after the acquittal of the Princess of Wales from the charges of Lady Douglas, and that event of course formed the principal topic of public conversation. He determined on advertising the appearance of his infant son in a new pantomime, and skilfully availing himself of the excitement of the public mind, privately circulated a report that Lady Douglas was to be present on the occasion. The scheme answered completely; those whom the greatest exertions of genius would have failed to attract, crowded to his theatre, a room in a public-house, in hopes of gaining a sight of her Ladyship. While all eyes were anxiously employed in watching for her entrance, the seats, which had been temporarily erected for the occasion, suddenly gave way beneath the pressure, and the audience fell to the ground. No serious accident occurred, and the activity of Kean soon prepared another room for the reception of the company. The produce of this benefit was sufficient for his present purpose, and he determined to return to Weymouth. On his departure, General Doyle, who was highly pleased with the talents of the child, generously offered to take its education upon himself; but to this proposal Kean could not bring himself to consent. On his arrival at Weymouth, an opportunity offered of testifying his resentment of the ill treatment which he had received from the manager. He found the company playing to empty benches, and peremptorily refused the solicitations of the manager, who hoped by his means to reinstate himself in the public favour. Brighter prospects now began to dawn upon him, and he received offers from Taunton and Dorchester, at each of which places in succession he accepted an engagement. At the latter place, Kean was performing by turns in every walk of the Drama; *Tragedy, Comedy, Opera, Pantomime*,—nothing came amiss to him. Indeed he appears most to have delighted *the Natives* in the latter; his *harlequin leaps*, it is said, being most extraordinary.

Dr. Drury, who had long marked the aspiring originality of his genius, and the rapid strides with which he was advancing towards perfection, saw him at Exeter in 1813, and was so struck with his performance, that he immediately wrote to Mr. Pascoe Grenfell, one of the managing Committee of Drury-Lane Theatre, recommending that a trial should be granted him there, and observing, that he alone was capable of sustaining the declining fortunes of the theatre. Drury-lane was then on the verge of ruin: there seemed to be a spell cast over it, under the

influence of which nothing could prosper—novelty after novelty had been produced in vain—the tide of public opinion set strongly against the establishment, and all the exertions of the Committee to stem the torrent had proved unavailing :—in a word the house was literally deserted. It was at this critical moment that Mr. Grenfell received the communication, which he immediately imparted to the other members of the Committee, and they decided upon sending Mr. Arnold, who was then stage-manager at Drury-Lane, to Dorchester, to determine upon the correctness of the imitation. The parts which Kean performed on the nights of Mr. Arnold's visit, were *Octavian* in *The Mountaineers*, and *Kanko* in *The Savages*, founded on the story of *La Perouse*. Mr. Arnold immediately resolved to secure his talents for Drury-Lane : he invited him to breakfast with him the next morning ; and so satisfied did he feel that Kean was capable of fulfilling all the expectations of the Committee, that, without waiting for further instructions from them, he immediately entered into an engagement with him for three years, at an encreasing salary of eight guineas a-week for the first year, ten for the second, and twelve for the third. But the pleasant anticipations which this circumstance was calculated to inspire, were damped by the death of his eldest son, which took place on the same day. His engagement at Dorchester still wanted three weeks of its completion : in the mean while the London Papers were busily employed in collecting the floating rumours, and in raising the public expectation ; while, on the other hand, the provincial Editors began to open their eyes to his claims, and to laud him to the skies. As soon as he was at liberty he set out for London, and on his arrival was introduced by Mr. Arnold to the Committee, who were induced, by his personal appearance, to form so humble an estimate of his talents, that they severely lectured Mr. Arnold for his want of taste and discernment in burthening the Theatre with so considerable a salary, to a performer so *little* likely to retrieve it from its almost hopeless situation. The agreement, however, could not be violated, and his claim upon the treasury was in the first instance admitted ; but before the second week had elapsed, a circumstance occurred which the Committee eagerly seized on, as a basis on which to found a pretence for getting rid of the engagement. Mr. Elliston wrote to the manager, and claimed him as engaged at the Surry Theatre. It seems, that ptevious to Kean's engagement at Drury-Lane, Mr. Elliston had offered him a situation at one of his establishments ; and had even gone so far as to propose the *enormous* salary of two pounds a-week to a man who could do *every thing*, though at the same time, he would not venture to conclude so weighty an affair without mature deliberation. Accordingly, while he

deliberated, Mr. Arnold carried off the prize, and he saved his money. Now, however, that he saw the turn which affairs were likely to take, he determined upon claiming Kean as his own. Kean immediately applied to Dr. Drury on the subject; and having laid before the Committee his correspondence with Mr. Elliston, which proved that no definitive arrangement had been entered into, was reinstated in his rights, and announced for his first appearance before a London audience on January 26, 1814.

Thus we see the benefit of active Friendship to bring forward obscure worth, and what powerful aids a discerning mind may render to those under the shade of difficulty, and the contumely of an ignorant multitude.

The part which he selected for this occasion was that of *Shylock*, and his success was most decisive. The originality of his style, and the vigour of his genius, drew down the most enthusiastic applause, which increased with every scene, and at length became absolutely tumultuous. His fame increased with each successive repetition of the character, and it was admitted that he might safely challenge competition with the most distinguished ornaments of the stage: but it was reserved for his performance of *Richard the Third* to place him at once on the highest pinnacle of dramatic glory. His first performance of this character took place on the 12th of February following; and so complete was his success, that it may fairly be said that he has made this part his own—that he has identified himself with it. The empty benches of Drury were now exchanged for overflowing houses, and so great was the attraction, that although the house was estimated to contain only 620*l.*, the usual receipts on the nights of his performance amounted to 700*l.* Sensible of this, the committee honourably canceled the original articles, and renewed the engagement for five years at the rate of 16*l.* a week for the first year, 18*l.* for the second, and 20*l.* for the remaining three, and made him a present of one hundred guineas.

On the 13th of March he played *Hamlet*, on May the 5th *Othello*, and on May the 7th *Iago*. In the first of these characters the force of his genius broke through the disadvantages of his figure, and the brilliant points which illuminated his delineation of the character were so numerous, as entirely to cast his defects into the shade. *Othello* absolutely electrified the audience, and his personification of that arduous character may be justly deemed one of the most powerful displays the Stage can boast of. On the 25th of May he took his first benefit, on which occasion he played *Luke* in *Riches* (a mutilation of Massinger's admirable play *The City Madam*), a character exceedingly well adapted for the display of his peculiar powers, and in which he could not fail to command universal applause. This



benefit was productive beyond all example ; the Committee having remitted the usual charge for the expenses of the house, and many of his admirers having paid liberally for their tickets : it is said to have produced him 2000*l.*, and certainly never was the public favour more deservedly given. In the course of the ensuing Season he appeared in *Macbeth*, *Romeo*, *Reuben Glenroy*, *Richard II.*, *Penruddock*, (*Zanga* and *Abel Drugger* for his benefit,) *Leon* and *Octavian*, and in each of those characters acquired new claims to public admiration, which had now reached its height, and which all the efforts of the rival theatre were unable to lessen.

It would be useless to follow him through the variety of characters which he successively personated, but there are circumstances connected with some of them which cannot be passed over in silence. We are indebted to him for the revival of many admirable old plays which had long been consigned to the shelf, and their places usurped by the fantastic fopperies which disgrace the present day. Among these *The City Madam*, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, *The Duke of Milan*, and *The Jew of Malta*, stand conspicuous, and the rich treat which they afford must be fresh in the recollection of every true lover of the drama : indeed, such was the effect produced by his *Sir Giles Overreach*, that a subscription was immediately entered into by his brother Actors, at the suggestion of Mr. Oxberry, for the purchase of a GOLD CUP, to be presented to him as a compliment to his excellence in that character, and several gentlemen connected with the Drama solicited to be made partners in the donation. On June 25, 1826, the Cup was presented by Mr. Palmer, then father of the Drury-Lane stage. After reading over the names of the donors, viz. :

The Right Hon. Lord BYRON, Hon. DOUGLAS KINNAIRD, Hon. G. LAMB, S. DAVIES, Esq., CHANDOS LEIGH, Esq., Messrs. POPE, OXBERRY, PALMER, DIBDEN, RAE, WEYITZER, HARLEY, KNIGHT, POWELL, BRAHAM, PYNE, HUGHES, WYATT, G. SMITH, PEAKE, Madame STORACE, Mrs. BILLINGTON, Miss KELLY, Mrs. BLAND, Mrs. SPARKS, Mrs. MARDYN, Mrs. ORGER, and others of the Drury-Lane Corps, amounting to upwards of fifty persons, Mr. Palmer spoke as follows :—

“To make any individual comment after what has been unanimously expressed by the donation, would be superfluous ; but believe this, *you* cannot feel more satisfaction in receiving the cup than *I* have pleasure in presenting it. By desire of the ladies and gentlemen whose names are here subscribed, permit me to give you this Cup, wishing you health, happiness, and long life to enjoy it.”

Mr. Kean then returned his thanks for the honour done him in the following manner :—

“ Gentlemen :—If I ever lamented the want of eloquence, I must do so on the present occasion, when I find myself incapable of expressing what I feel, or to reply to my friends in the glowing language which they have used. I cannot but lament my deficiency, and trust they will accept the honest dictate of my heart in the declaration, that I consider this as the proudest moment of my existence. In public favour there has been, there will be those that hold a superior rank to myself ; I truly value the public approbation, but the favour I have gained in the opinion and attachment of my professional colleagues is most flattering to the best feelings of my heart, and the recollection of it shall never be effaced from my memory. It has ever been my study to obtain their good opinion, and this token of their regard I proudly conceive to be a testimony of the success of my endeavours.

“ I shall study to be brief, but I must be insensible if I did not truly appreciate the honour conferred upon me in the present tribute, and the past attentions of the father of the stage. A just and commendable prejudice exists in favour of early impressions, and a compliment is increased when it comes from a veteran, (who remembers and venerates the old school,) by whom the talents of Garrick and Barry are held in reverence, and who trod the stage along with them. The approbation of Mr. Palmer therefore comes to me with peculiar gratefulness.

“ Permit me to conclude by saying, that however honourable to my feelings, I should receive this valuable mark of your commendation with diffidence, did not my heart whisper me that my professional success gratifies me the most by its affording me the means of serving those who may not be so fortunate as myself—for I trust that no one, however hostile, can say of me that I am changed by fortune. I offer you individually my sincere thanks, assuring you that it shall always be my study to preserve your good wishes, and that the memory of this hour shall be engraven on my heart to its latest pulsation.”

About this period he thought fit to establish a Club, the ostensible motives of which were humanity, but the real principles pleasure.—This was called the Wolf Club. A Speech delivered by Kean as Grand Master on the opening of the Session, sufficiently indicated the principles of the Society, yet an erroneous opinion got into circulation that it was the object of the Society to support Kean by crushing his competitors. In consequence of this idea the Society was dissolved. After this Mr. Kean turned his attention to the study of Music, and became, in a very short period capable of touching the Piano in a style that would not disgrace a professor.

In the Summer of 1818, he made a trip to the Continent. He arrived at Paris on the 3d of July, and was almost immediately visited by the great French tragedian *Talma* ; who gave on the 15th, a superb dinner to him and a numerous party, which consisted of all the distinguished Artists in every line of the Drama, ladies as well as gentlemen, at that time in the French capital. The Managers of the *Théâtre Français*, also presented him with a superb snuff-box. Towards the close of this year, he made his appearance in *Brutus*, in Howard Payne's tragedy of that name, and in that character achieved the greatest triumph of his genius ; it was the last step to the pinnacle of excellence, and conveyed a most decisive answer to all those who had attempted to depreciate his former efforts. It had been asserted that he possessed but *one* manner of acting, that he was destitute of dignity, that he could not support the Roman character. But here was a character differing entirely from *all* which he had ever attempted, free from any of the dark passions, and without any of those points to which he used to give so much effect ; its leading feature was dignity, dignity approaching to the sublime, and downright simple energy.

In the commencement of 1819, a circumstance occurred which for a short time excited the public mind against him.— On the production of Miss Jane Porter's tragedy of "*Switzerland*," in which he had to sustain the principal character, conceiving that it afforded no peculiar opportunities for the display of his talents, it is affirmed that he *walked* through his part, and the Tragedy was consequently condemned. At this juncture Mr. Bucke, (who had some time before offered a Tragedy, entitled "*The Italians*" to the Committee, which had been accepted, and who had previously suspected Mr. Kean of some disaffection to his Tragedy,) seized this opportunity of withdrawing his play ; alleging Kean's conduct on this occasion as his reason for so doing. He immediately published "*The Italians*," with a preface ; which drew from Mr. Kean an answer written under the influence of angry feeling, and such as could not fail to expose him to the lash of his cooler and more discreet adversary, who was too able a tactician not to see the advantage which he had gained, and which he pursued in a triumphant reply, which closed the controversy. The public indignation, which was thus excited, was, however of short continuance : it could not long hold out against such a favourite ; so that in a few weeks it had passed away entirely, and the circumstances which gave rise to it were almost forgotten.

The next occurrence worthy of mention, is recorded in the following letter from Sir John Sinclair :—

"SIR,—Some of your friends in this city, (Edinburgh,) became extremely desirous of presenting you with a mark of

the high estimation which they entertain for your talents as an actor : more especially after having witnessed the very superior manner in which you performed the character of *Macbeth*.— After considering the subject, it was at last resolved to present you with a *Sword of State*, to be worn when you appear upon the Stage, in that Tragedy, as the *Crowned King of Scotland*. I have much pleasure in sending you the Sword, which is prepared by some of our ablest artists, for the purpose of being transmitted to you. ‘ *It is of the true Highland make,*’ and ornamented with some of the most valuable precious stones that Scotland produces.—‘ *Macbeth*’ is, on the whole, the greatest effort of dramatic genius the world has yet produced ; and no one has hitherto attempted to represent the Scottish Tyrant, who has done, or could possibly do more justice to the character, than the gentleman to whom I have now the honour of addressing myself.

“ The presentation of this Sword reminds me of two particulars :—1. The swords in ancient time were large and weighty, and the scabbards broad at the point. Hence, in Shakspeare, *Hotspur* describes himself (Part I. *Henry IV.* act i. scene 3,) ‘ *Leaning upon his sword,*’ that is to say, resting upon it in the scabbard. The sword also was not carried in belts attached to the person, (which with a large and heavy sword would have been too cumbersome,) but was either held on the right hand, or carried on the left arm, the elbow being bent for the purpose. In battle, when the sword was drawn, the *scabbard was thrown away*, to imply, as the phrase denotes, that the combat was to terminate with the death of one of the parties. 2. There is reason to believe that Shakspeare collected materials for the tragedy of ‘ *Macbeth*,’ on the spot where many of the transactions took place. It is recorded in GUTHRIE’S ‘ *History of Scotland*,’ that Queen Elizabeth sent some English actors to the Court of her successor James, which was then held at Perth ; and it is supposed that Shakspeare was one of the number. This idea receives strong confirmation by the following striking circumstance : The Castle of Dunsinane is situated about seven or eight miles from Perth. When I examined, some years ago, the remains of that Castle, and the scenes in its neighbourhood, I found, that the traditions of the country people *were identically the same as the story represented in Shakspeare* :—there was but one exception. The tradition is, that *Macbeth* endeavoured to escape when he found the Castle no longer tenable. Being pursued by *Macduff*, he ran up an adjoining hill, but instead of being slain in single combat by *Macduff*, (which Shakspeare preferred as being a more interesting dramatic incident) the country people said, that in despair he threw himself over a precipice, at the bottom of which there



still remains ' *The Giant's Grave* ', where it is supposed *Macbeth* was buried. When you next visit Scotland, it would be interesting to take an early opportunity of examining these classic scenes.

" With my best wishes that you may long continue an ornament to the British Theatre, I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

" JOHN SINCLAIR."

To this epistle, Mr. Kean made the following reply :—

" SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, announcing the transmission of a valuable Sword, which you teach me to receive as a token of the flattering estimation in which my professional exertions in the Northern Capital are held by yourself, and a portion of that public, to whose fostering indulgence I am already bound in lasting gratitude. To those unknown Patrons, in whose name you have been pleased, in such gratifying terms, to address me, I beg you will convey the assurance that their kindness has not been lavished where it is not duly appreciated and deeply felt.

" I am happy in the conviction, that I shall only do justice to their intention, in receiving the Sword as at once a record of National Liberality, and a pledge of Scottish patronage of the Stage : may I not recognise this as their object, by the selection of the distinguished pen which has honoured me with the communication, as well as in the costume of the present itself, which, you are pleased to inform me, is strictly national, both in its character and in its ornaments ? Permit me to add, Sir, that my own feelings could feel no higher gratification than to be instructed in the belief, that I have been the fortunate instrument of increasing the number of Patrons of our art, the difficulties of which may in some measure be appreciated by the variety and instability of success ; and in which we but too sensibly feel, how necessary is public protection to encourage and sustain us even in our least chequered and uncoloured career.

" I have the honour to be, with grateful respect,

Your obedient Servant,

" E. KEAN."

The annexed Inscriptions appear on the sword.—

" On the Front.—*To Edmund Kean, Esq. as a Tribute of admiration to his splendid talents, from his friends at Edinburgh, Presented November, 1826.*—On the Reverse.—*This Sword was presented to Edmund Kean, Esq. when he appears on the Stage as Macbeth, the King of Scotland.*"

In the autumn of this year, Mr. Kean announced his intention of visiting America, conceiving himself liberated from his engagement at Drury-Lane, in consequence of a misunderstanding which had taken place between him and Mr. Elliston, into whose hands that establishment had now fallen. The public voice, however, was loudly expressed in opposition to this determination, and he submitted to its demands, and resumed his duties at Drury-Lane during the following season. His intention, nevertheless, was only relinquished for a time ; for on the 17th of September, 1820, he took leave of the audience in the following Address :—

“ LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :—The play-bills have announced to you that a considerable period must elapse before I can hope to have the honour of again appearing before you ; and, when I reflect on the uncertainty of human life, a reflection will intrude itself that this may possibly be my last performance on these boards—(Here there were loud cries of *No, no ! we hope not, Kean !* and Mr. K. seemed to be deeply affected.)—My feelings overcome me ; I am unable to proceed.”

After a considerable pause, he continued as follows :—

“ I cannot but remember with gratitude, that on this spot I first enjoyed the welcome of public favour ; you received me, a wanderer, and unknown ; you gave me a residence and a name ; your support lent me new life ; and it is your favour that freights my venture to that distant shore to which I now proceed : it has been the pride and pleasure of my existence ; and my epitaph shall record it when I am no more.

“ Ladies and Gentlemen :—After seven years of anxious endeavour and struggle to deserve your favour, I have now to bid you farewell. My recollections will be gratifying, for they will remind me of that honourable rank in my profession, to which your kindness elevated me. If at any time I have forgotten the dignity of that station, it should be imputed to the delirium which your favour inspired ; and it is to you alone that I need apologise. It is you who have sheltered me from the innumerable attacks of calumny to which I have been exposed.—My feelings are too much excited to suffer me to find words to express them. What always did support, and supports me now, is the conviction that I have ever been before an enlightened and generous public. With the utmost respect, regret, and gratitude, I bid you farewell.”

After the conclusion of the performance he gave a Supper to the performers, and immediately set out for Liverpool, where he took leave on the 6th of October, in *Othello*. On the 11th he embarked for New-York, where he arrived on the 10th of November, and made his *debut* in *Richard III.* So highly was public curiosity excited, that many people are said to have come

from Philadelphia, a distance of 90 miles, for the sole purpose of seeing his performance ; and the receipts, which before his arrival had seldom amounted to 1000 dollars per week, now produced more than that sum nightly. On the 28th of December, some Gentlemen of New-York gave him a public dinner at the City Hotel, after which he set out for Philadelphia. From Philadelphia he proceeded to Boston, where the demand for places to witness his performance was so great that they were actually disposed of by auction. He returned to New-York in April, played again at Philadelphia in May, and again visited Boston, but not meeting there on this occasion the same warmth of approbation which he obtained on his first visit, he quitted the Theatre in disgust, leaving the manager to appease the audience the best way he could. He arrived at New-York for the third time on the 28th of May, with the intention of continuing his performances there, but finding that a strong prejudice had been excited against him by his conduct at Boston, and that the Americans were determined to resent it, he resolved to leave America immediately. Accordingly he sailed on the 8th of June, and reached Liverpool in the third week of July, after an absence of nine months. During his stay in America, he erected in the church-yard of St. Paul, at new-York, an elegant monument to the memory of George Frederick Cooke, who is buried there. The monument consists of a simple pedestal, surmounted by an Urn, and bears the following inscription :

"Erected to the Memory of GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE, by *Edmund Kean*, of the Theatre Royal Drury-Lane, 1821."

In the ensuing Season he again resumed his duties at Drury-Lane, where he was received with that renewed cordiality which the return of an old favourite is sure to awaken.

The first act of Kean deserving of notice after his return from America, was the appropriating the proceeds of his annual Benefit at Drury Lane, in aid of the Funds for the relief of the distressed Irish ; this forms one, amongst numerous, instances of the generosity of his disposition and may serve to palliate in some degree the failings which are unhappily attached to his character.

It is now our painful duty briefly to notice the unpleasant cause which has so materially affected the private character of this extraordinary individual, the effects of which have apparently expatriated him, in the very Zenith of his fame and constrained him to solicit in a foreign \* land "a shelter in which he may close his professional and mortal career."

On Monday, January 17th, 1825, we find Mr. Kean defendant in an action brought by Albion Cox, Esqr. Alderman of the City of London, for criminal conversation with his (the

\* Vide his Letter addressed to the Citizens of New York.

Plaintiff's) Wife; the facts were sufficiently proved, and \$800 damages were awarded. The evidence on the part of the prosecution went to prove a breach not only of morality, but of the ties of intimate friendship, Alderman Cox having been one of the earlier patrons of Kean, and, up to the period of the discovery of the present injury, his sincere Friend. Mr. Scarlett on the part of the Defendant in an extremely ingenious Speech proved several acts of gross impropriety on the part of the Plaintiff, which if they did not establish the fact of collusion between the Plaintiff and his Wife, satisfactorily proved that Kean had been allowed, unchecked, yet perfectly with the cognizance of the Husband, to be the willing participant in the seductions of an unprincipled woman.

The public feeling was much excited by the result of this Trial, and in the very fervor of such excitement Kean was announced to appear at Drury Lane; the House was crowded to excess. The enemies of Kean, appeared determined to prevent his performance; placards, catcalls and every other species of annoyance were put into requisition, effectually to carry their point, and the whole performance passed in dumb Show; this system of persecution continued for several nights, 'till at length wearied with the unceasing opposition, he set out on his usual year's provincial tour. But the spirit of persecution still tracked his steps, and he who lately delighted and enraptured crowded audiences with his transcendent talents now drew tumultuous and enraged Spectators to insult the Idol of their former worship. Exceptions however there were to this general outcry, and the compiler of this sketch, remembers witnessing the performance at Liverpool to a crowded and fashionable audience, without the slightest diminution of his accustomed attraction.

In this extremity, America, appeared the only Asylum left for the discarded favorite; yet there a weighty and long account remained to be settled; trusting to his powers, and the acknowledged liberality of our American Brethren, he accordingly sailed in the Packet Ship Leeds and arrived in New-York in October last. Considerable excitation was created by the announcement of his re-appearance; the Newspapers abounded in every species of personal attack upon his character, calculated to enrage the public feeling against him; while on the contrary, his numerous friends exerted every engine of their influence to produce for him a favourable reception. On Monday the 4th November, 1825, he made his appearance at the Park Theatre, in his favorite character of Richard. At an early hour every part of the house was filled, but no ladies honored him with their presence; the most tumultuous applause followed the rise of the Curtain, and when Kean made



his appearance, the Pit rose in one mass and gave him six cheers, which were participated in by every part of the House. Kean came forward smiling, folded his arms and calmly awaited the termination of the applause to address the Audience, and it was presumed, with the intention of offering some Apology for his conduct, but the incessant cheering and vociferation prevented his intention: having made several attempts to speak, he went to the side-scene and called Mr. Simpson the Manager who came forward and prayed that Mr. Kean might be heard, as the New York Audience was not in the habit of condemning an Actor without a hearing: to all which a ready assent was yielded but the continued vociferation gave a practical denial to the same! The Play then proceeded, but amid such *shouts, groans and applause*, that not one syllable of the performance could be heard—cries of "*Boston! send him to Boston!*" were uppermost in the mingled sounds, missiles were hurled on the Stage, and an orange struck Mr. Kean on the breast,—the tumult continued until the end of the Play, and the Curtain fell amid the most deafening and uproarious scene of confusion that ever disgraced a Theatre. The events of the Night induced Mr. Kean to write the following Letter, which appeared in all the Papers on the Wednesday following, the night on which he was announced for Othello:—

"*Messrs. Editors.*—Sirs,—With oppressed feelings, heart-rending to my friends, and triumphant to my enemies, I make an appeal to that country famed for hospitality to the stranger, and mercy to the conquered. Allow me to say, Sirs, whatever are my offences, I disclaim all intention of offering anything in the shape of disrespect towards the inhabitants of New York—they received me from the first with an enthusiasm, grateful in those hours to my pride, in the present to my memory. I cannot recal to my mind any act or thought that did not prompt me to an unfeigned acknowledgment of their favors as a public, and profound admiration of the private worth of those circles, in which I had the honour to move.

"That I have committed an error, appears too evident from the all-decisive voice of the public; but, surely, it is but justice to the delinquent (whatever may be his enormities,) to be allowed to make reparation where the offences were committed. My misunderstandings took place in Boston. To Boston I shall assuredly go, to apologise for my indiscretions.

"I visit this country now, under different feelings and auspices than on a former occasion. Then I was an ambitious man, and the proud representative of Shakspeare's heroes. The spark of ambition is extinct; and I merely ask a shelter in which to close my professional and mortal career. I give the weapon into the hands of my enemies; if they are brave they will not turn it against the defenceless.

EDMUND KEAN.

*Washington Hall, November 15th, 1825."*

The most intense anxiety, was manifested as to the result of the second night's performance, the somewhat humiliating appeal had removed the scruples of the moderate party and confirmed the Friendship of his Friends; others however considered it as no Apology, and a great portion of this party occupied the Theatre on the Wednesday Evening. The appear-

ance of the " Noble Moor" was the signal for attack—Applauses and Hisses again commenced, mingled in dinning confusion, until the Friends of Kean wisely hit upon the expedient of suppressing their approbation, which by Placards exhibited in various parts of the House they effected. The hisses became fainter as the Play proceeded, until the third Act, when the Audience becoming interested in the Piece, and overcome by the splendid display of Kean's unrivalled performance in this Act, by one spontaneous burst of applause, consigned all animosity to oblivion, and bowing to the supereminent genius of the Actor, cancelled the frailties of the Man! On Friday night he appeared in Shylock; several respectable Ladies filled the Boxes, and all opposition having ceased, the remainder of his engagement passed over perfectly tranquil, and the general opinion appears to have settled down in New York materially in his favour. The critics considered him improved in his acting and the Public felt it would be ungenerous to insult a man who had thrown himself upon their liberality.

Having vanquished the prejudices of the New York Audience, Kean felt more encouraged to venture upon the troubled waters which awaited him at Boston.—Accordingly on Wednesday, December 23d, he was announced to make his *débüt* before the Boston Public. The applications for tickets were unprecedented and some hopes were entertained that a favourable result would terminate the Evening's performance, but such was the violence of party feeling that he was not allowed to offer even a word of apology or explanation. Mr. Finn attempted to sustain the character of Richard, but the indignation of the Audience compelled the performance to be stopped at the close of the first Act, and not content with this manifestation of their displeasure they proceeded to demolish the interior of the Theatre, destroying the Chandeliers, and committing every other species of depredation. The crowd outside became equally alarming, and it was found necessary by the authorities, to read the Riot Act before it could be dispersed. On the ensuing day, Kean addressed the following Letter to the Public, which however only aggravated the feeling against him, and he returned to complete his engagement at New York :—

" Sir,—I take the liberty of informing the Citizens of Boston, (through the medium of your journal) of my arrival; in confidence that liberty and forbearance will gain the ascendancy over prejudice and cruelty.—That I have erred I acknowledge.—That I have suffered for my errors, my loss of fame and fortune is too melancholy an illustration. Acting from the impulse of irritation I certainly was disrespectful to the Boston Public; calm deliberation convinces me I was wrong.—The first step towards the Throne of Mercy, is confession—the hopes we are taught, forgiveness.—Man must not expect more than those attributes which we offer to our God."

After going through his *favorite Characters* at New York, Mr. Kean was induced to accept an engagement at Philadelphia. The high tone of morality professed by this City, warranted a just fear that his reception might not be the most favorable. Contrary however to general expectation, his reception was marked with so small a portion of displeasure that it might be termed a triumph, which was gratefully acknowledged by Kean in the following address published the next day :

*To the Citizens of Philadelphia.*—I intended to address you last evening, but was prevailed on to proceed with my part, rather than give utterance to the feelings of gratitude which you then created in my bosom.

Friends who take an interest in my welfare, assure me that the most unfounded stories have been circulated, with a view to prejudice you against me. For my past errors, the most implacable, I should suppose, would be satisfied that I have suffered sufficient punishment. The inhabitants of this city, I am totally unconscious of ever having offended. But if I have unconsciously done so I most sincerely regret it. I have always borne towards this city the kindest feelings, and the events of last night, will impress still deeper upon my heart, the respect and gratitude, which it shall be the study and pride of my life to manifest.

EDMUND KEAN.

Philadelphia, Thursday morning.

After the close of a very successful and profitable engagement he again returned to New York, appeared in several new Characters, and then proceeded to Charleston where his reception was in the highest degree flattering.

At the request of several Gentlemen of Montreal, Mr. Kean closed an engagement with Mr. F. Brown, the present Lessee of the Montreal Theatre, and made his first appearance in *Richard*, on Monday, the 31st ultimo. The unusual circumstance of the first Tragic Actor of the day, appearing in these Provinces, the high reputation of that Actor, and the popularity his fame and his adventures had excited, all conspired to render his appearance in Montreal one of deep interest. The House was crowded to excess, and the effect produced by his superior performance of the "crook'd back'd tyrant" was powerfully impressive. He has since played his usual round of Characters, with approbation ; a Public Dinner, has been given to him, and the most flattering personal civilities have welcomed him amongst his Countrymen and fellow subjects. He has accepted an engagement to perform a few Nights at our Theatre, and will afford the Quebec Public the means of satisfying a laudable curiosity to witness the performance of this extraordinary and highly talented Actor.

In conclusion we may be allowed to say, that Mr. Kean is undoubtedly the greatest Actor of the age.—His private defects, his eccentricities and his weaknesses may deteriorate from his private character but cannot interfere with his public and professional one ; in that light he comes amongst us, and we trust his reception may justify the expectation. We might cite

many instances which prove that Mr. Kean has redeeming points in his composition, sufficient to balance many of his defects—he has amply acknowledged his follies—let the retribution rest with his own conscience and a less unerring tribunal.

QUEBEC, September 4th 1826.

### A FEW ANECDOTES OF MR. KEAN.

Before the close of the season at Drury-Lane, 1822 an opportunity occurred of testifying that whatever might be the eccentricities of Mr. Kean's conduct, the goodness of his heart could not be called in question. The sufferings of the starving people of Ireland had awakened the sympathy of their more fortunate fellow-subjects in England, and a subscription was set on foot for the purpose of relieving them. To this subscription Mr. Kean generously devoted the proceeds of his benefit (which has never produced him less than 500*l.*) setting a noble example to those who may hereafter profit as he has done by the public favour.

In the course of a tour this year, he met with an old acting acquaintance in very distressed circumstances. The child of this person played the youngest Prince to Kean's *Richard III.*, and after it had been smothered by order of the bloody Gloucester, he took an opportunity to slip 10 guineas into its hand, as a present for the father. This is one taken from among many similar instances.

Some years before, on his way to Liverpool, he performed one night at the Buxton Theatre, where the prices had been raised; an overflow took place, and Kean was to be remunerated with a clear half of the receipts. It so happened, that the honest manager, with whom fortune dealt hardly, had a large family, which circumstance no sooner reached the ears of Kean than it made a suitable impression. Accordingly next morning, when the Thespian conductor tendered the cash, as by agreement, "I'll have none of it," said Kean, "for you have *nine* children, and I have only *one*." We are not aware that so superlative an instance of generosity can require the slightest illustration.

The following anecdote is so characteristic, that we cannot refrain from inserting it:—When Kean was at Portsmouth two or three years ago, he was requested by the manager and two or three more, after one morning's rehearsal, to accompany them to take share of a bottle of Madeira and a biscuit. Kean objected at first, but at length consented, and away they went to one of the first rate inns in Portsmouth. The landlord,



when apprised that Kean was of the party, ushered them into an elegant room, thanked the actor for the honour that he did him, and for ten minutes overwhelmed him with obsequious civilities. Kean bore it well for some time ; but at length knitting his brow, and fixing his eyes upon the landlord with that tremendous expression so often witnessed, said, " Mr. H——, I came into your house, at the request of these gentlemen, to partake of some refreshment, and not to be pestered with your civilities, which to me are so many insults. Look at me, Sir, well : you do not recollect me, I see ; but you know that I am *Mr. Kean*, EDMUND KEAN, Sir ; the same Edmund Kean that I was fifteen years ago, when you kept a very small inn in Portsmouth. At that time, Sir, I was a member of a strolling company of players, and came with a troop to your fair, where I acted. I remember well that I went one day to the bar of your house, and called for half a pint of porter, which, after I had waited your pleasure patiently, was given to me by you with one hand, as the other was extended to receive the money : never, Sir, shall I forget your insolent demeanour, and the acuteness of my feelings. Now, Mr. H——, things are altered : you are in a fine hotel, and I am—but never mind ; you are still plain H——, and I am Edmund Kean, the same *Edmund Kean* that I was fifteen years ago, when you insulted me. Look at me again, Sir. What alteration beyond that of dress do you discover in me ? Am I a better man than I was then ? What is there in me now that you should overwhelm me with your compliments ? Go to, Mr. H——, I am ashamed of you ; keep your wine in your cellar, I will have none of it ! " Having said this, the indignant actor turned his back upon the mortified landlord, and with the whole of his companions immediately left the house, to get their refreshments elsewhere.

Among the host of men of first rate talent and unquestioned abilities, for forming a just estimate of Kean's claims to admiration, none have done this highly-gifted actor more homage than Lord Byron ; so delighted was this great poet with his masterly delineation of *Richard III.* that he visited the Theatre *every night* of his performing the character during the first season of his appearance in London : he also sent him an elegant snuff box from Italy, and addressed the following Lines to him, which evince the very high opinion the Noble Bard must have formed of his histrionic powers :—

—" Thou art the sun's bright child !  
The genius that irradiates thy mind  
Caught all its purity and light from heaven !  
Thine is the task, with mastery most perfect,  
To bind the passions captive in thy train !  
Each chrysal tear that slumbers in the depth  
Of feeling's fountain, doth obey thy call !

There's not a joy or sorrow mortals prove,  
 A passion to humanity allied,  
 But, tribute of allegiance, owes to thee :  
 The shrine thou worshippest is Nature's self,—  
 The only altar genius deigns to seek.  
 Thine offering—a bold and burning mind,  
 Whose impulse guides thee to the realms of fame,  
 Where, crown'd with well-earned laurels,—all thine own,  
 It heralds thee to Immortality !

In the *Provincial Correspondence* of the "Cabinet" of August, 1809, is a curious article from Swansea, in which the name of our hero frequently occurs. The performance of "*Catherine and Petruchio*," on the 23d of June is noticed : "*Petruchio*, by KEAN. On the 25th, a ballet "got up by KEAN," called "*The Savages*," was produced ; and he played *Captain Faulkner* in the "*Way to get Married*." On the 28th, "*The Savages*" was repeated, and KEAN personated *Osmond* in the "*Castle Spectre*." On the 5th of July, he is noticed as having played *Rolla*, and Mrs. KEAN *Cora*, her first appearance. On the 10th, (when the performances must have terminated about four in the morning) "*The Exile*"—"Two *Strings to your Bow*"—"Raising the Wind"—and "*My Grandmother*," were represented, in the first of which KEAN was the *Daran*. Throughout this letter, not a word is said in praise of his performances. How little did the writer then suspect, that ere the lapse of five years, the island would wring from one extremity to the other with the fame of the man he had thus slightly noticed !

Mr. SHERIDAN was so much offended at being excluded from any concern in the rebuilding of Drury Lane theatre after the fire, that he made a resolution never to enter it ; from which he did not deviate till a few months before his death. When KEAN, however, came out, and his talents became the universal topic of conversation and admiration, Mr. S. was impressed with an eager curiosity to see him ; yet, faithful to his resolution, he could not be prevailed on to witness his dramatic exertions ; he would see Mr. KEAN, but not *Richard*, *Shylock*, *Othello*. One day when Mr. KEAN was to perform, he was invited first to dine with Mr. SHERIDAN and an intimate friend of his, deeply concerned in the theatre, at a neighbouring tavern. They sat for two hours, when Mr. KEAN was obliged to leave the party, and attend to his professional duty ; but such was the interest excited in Mr. SHERIDAN's mind by this new dramatic meteor, that during the whole time he stayed his attention was entirely riveted upon him ; he studied his every look, his every word, his every gesture, nor did he drink even a single glass of wine. "Mr. KEAN (said Mr. SHERIDAN's friend, in relating the anecdote) may boast of what no other man ever could do, of having even charmed SHERIDAN's attention away from his bot-

tle." When KEAN was gone, SHERIDAN said—"What salary do you give that man?"—"Fifteen pounds a-week" was the reply.—"'Tis a shame ; (he said) he ought at least to have double that sum ; take my word, you have got a treasure, he will be the salvation and support of the theatre." Mr. SHERIDAN at length could no longer resist the attraction of KEAN's talents, but did go to the theatre to see his performance of the character of *Sir Giles Overreach* of which he thought so highly, that he said—"There is mind indeed ! those are talents that can never fail, but must be more and more admired the more they are known."

sala-  
was  
t to  
ure;  
Mr.  
of  
ance  
ght  
ta-  
ired